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HERETH SANDLIN INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO HELP VETERANS BRING MILITARY MEDICAL EXPERIENCE TO CIVILIAN WORKFORCE

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Washington, DC (September 29, 2010) - Today, U.S. Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin introduced the Veterans Medic Corpsmen Physician Assistant Demonstration Program Act of 2010 with the original cosponsor support of Economic Opportunity Subcommittee Ranking Member John Boozman of Arkansas. The goal of the legislation is to make it easier for veterans with military medical experience to use their skills in the civilian workforce as physician assistants (PAs).

“I am proud to introduce this legislation to help veterans who have gained valuable medical experience in service to their country continue to use those skills to fill health care needs once they enter the civilian workforce,” said Herseth Sandlin. “This is a win-win for men and women who serve our country and for states like South Dakota that can benefit from an increased number of qualified physician assistants to fill vital roles in health care across the state. We should do everything we can to help our men and women who are transitioning out of military service translate the knowledge and skills from their military service into the civilian workforce.”

Hearings and roundtables held by the full House Veterans Affairs Committee, and by the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee chaired by Rep. Herseth Sandlin, have confirmed that a key challenge for veterans in finding employment opportunities is the difficulty in translating military skills and experience into the civilian work force. This legislation works to overcome that hurdle by providing grants to schools with accredited physician assistant programs to create fast-track programs that take into account a veteran’s military medical experience. These programs would allow eligible veterans to more quickly complete their PA education and

complete licensure and certification requirements.

The legislation has been endorsed by the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, the Blinded Veterans Association, and the Disabled American Veterans.

In addition to the grant program created by the bill, the legislation requires a study to gauge the effectiveness of the demonstration project and whether the program should also help veterans obtain certification in other medical fields.

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